

PIETAS FANATICA,

O R

THE D R I V E L L E R S ,

A B U R L E S Q U E P O E M .

Charitably recommended,

IN THEIR INTERVALS OF SENSE,

To the serious Consideration of those pious

L U N A T I C S ,

Who blindly worship the BRAZEN IMAGE

They have lately set up in a certain CHAPEL in

B I R M I N G H A M .

“ Fools that ye are, like *Israel's* Fools of yore,

“ The CALF yourselves have fashion'd, ye adore;

“ But let kind Reason once resume her Reign,

“ This God will dwindle to a CALF again.”

CHURCHILL.

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PIETAS FANATICA,

O R

The D R I V E L L E R S.

T O please the vulgar and unthinking crowd,
Are MERRY ANDREWS, and their tricks allow'd ;
From town to town with winged speed they run,
To propagate their nostrums and their fun ;
Their stands they take,—her standard FOLLY rears,
And soon she gains unnumber'd volunteers ;
When loud they raise the idiotic grin,
The trumpets sounded, and the sports begin.
The arch JACK PUDDING first with shrewd grimace,
Whose brazen front *Hibernia* wou'd disgrace,
With senseless jargon entertains the throng,
And tells what feats he'll shew them ere't be long.
With pride elate the motley hero swells,
And boasts his skill in witchcraft and in spells.

A 2

Fix'd

Fix'd with surprize the gaping boobies stand,
 " And swear he has the devil at command ;
 " Such wond'rous tricks no mortal man cou'd know,
 " Unless he'd dealings with the powers below."—
 By wiles like these are thoughtleſs fools trepann'd,
 Who *coculorum* * cunning never scann'd :
 Who soon to such fly knaves become a prey,
 Nor tho' oft bilk'd, have ſene to keep away.

Now while attention dwells on every ear,
 And to their brothers other fools draw near ;
 The lower myrmidons the ſignal take,
 And for their gambols preparation make.
 The tumbling apparatus is brought on,
 And antic pranks and gestures are begun ;
 The ſtage elactic favours their design,
 While other apes are ſkipping on the line ;
 With great agility their ſports purſue,
 And twist and turn their dext'rous pow'r to fheu.
 " *Ods Zouks! 'tis clanely done,*" the rustics cry,
 While ſtupid wonder speaks in either eye ;
 From ear to ear their hideous mouths extend,
 And clam'rous joy their noify throats diſtend.
 The grand impostor here his wit employs,
 And to allure them ſhews the dazzling prize ;
 The glittering bauble he holds out to view,
 To tempt and cozen the unwary crew,
 Who to their leatherne purſes now repair,
 And clouds of 'kerchiefs ride aloft in air.

* A cant term used by the celebrated conjuror *Jonas*, and others, when, by legerdemain, they pick the pockets, and impose on the credulity of their audience.

Their

Their empty pates the cred'lous numpskulls scratch,
 And quick to Jove their pious pray'rs dispatch,
 That he would smile propitious on their fate,
 And give success to *Dobbin, Dick, or Kate.*
 At length, too late, the bubble is found out,
 And sullen murmurs swell the rabble rout,
 Who now from folly's throne with rage retreat,
 Cursing their luckless stars for this defeat.—
 In vain doth reason point out better ways,
 Their marble skulls are proof 'gainst all she says.
 With more than mulish obstinacy fraught,
 They nothing know—nor yet will they be taught,
 But will, in spite of all that can be done,
 Into destruction's whirlpool headlong run.

So spiritual quacks gild o'er the pious pill,
 To dupe the ignorant, and their pockets fill ;
 Their deadly drugs they copiously dispense,
 To poison virtue, truth, and common sense ;
 While o'er themselves they cast the specious veil,
 And from the credulous artfully conceal,
 Each wound, each bruise, each putrefied sore,
 With which their noisome frames are cover'd o'er.
 But sober reason can their wiles detect,
 And bring to light each moral, gross defect,
 Can clearly prove what each impostor knows,
 Disease from him originally flows ;
 That he the mind and body does impair,
 With those vile nostrums which his hands prepare,
 That fraud and cunning with insidious smile
 Work out the purpose of his secret guile.

WHITFIELD—of modern hypocrites the first,
 And—while he liv'd—of all bad men the worst,
 Who retail'd souls as grocers retail tea,
 And gravely damn'd who came without a fee.
 He, like another PETER, kept the keys
 Of heaven's gate, to let in who might please ;
 But none admittance there could get, but who
 Cou'd pay the porter, and most richly too.
 This glorious, godly trade, he long pursu'd,
 While to his stock excessive wealth accru'd.
 But soon his busines was so much increas'd,
 He must employ a journeyman at least ;
 Who being by a good example taught,
 His master's holy flame he quickly caught,
 And tho' his zeal and diligence was great,
 His daily duty never was compleat.—
 At length old *Gripus* other servants hir'd,
 And told them these were qualities requir'd ;—
 A face of brass, and tough Stentorian lungs,
 And like Bell-clappers hung must be their tongues,
 That as he only sought *celestial* Fame,
 Blacksmiths or Taylors were to him the same.—
 To these emissaries he gave the charge,
 That they must travel thro' the world at large ;
 To strengthen, succour, and support the cause
 Of rank hypocrisy,—and despise the laws
 Of sober reason, honesty, and truth,
 For this alone his devilish pride cou'd sooth.
 The suppliant herd obey their demi-god,
 And rest their fate dependent on his nod.

Long in this isle did peace and virtue reign,
 And smiling nature gladder'd every plain ;
 But since the sons of Belial have appear'd,
 Truth and Religion are no more rever'd ;
 Falshood and cunning these infernals teach,
 In what they practice, and in what they preach.
 Like that grim monster * who in days of yore,
 Breath'd death and pestilence at ev'ry door :
 So they infect the tranquil, social life,
 And sow the seeds of enmity and strife ;
 From town to town the dire contagion spread,
 And stamp damnation on each faithless head.—
 Plac'd on a tub (like that so fam'd of old,
 Whose surly lord despis'd the power of gold)
 With hands uplifted and distorted face
 They bellow loudly for *all-saving Grace* :
 But all must know, how'er they may declaim,
 That *Gold—all-saving Gold's*—their only aim.—
 Thus do they plunder an unthinking tribe,
 And sell salvation for a paltry bribe ;
 And those who're able, but refuse to give,
 They say, in hell eternally will live.—
 Long have these rav'ning wolves enjoy'd the spoils
 Of public discord and domestic broils :
 Long have they fatten'd on their impious trade,
 And gloried in the mischiefs they have made :
 Nor town, nor village, but with shame must own,
 These fiends have drove religion from her throne.—
 Throughout the streets of *Birmingham* 'tis seen,
 Fell superstition reigns a tyrant queen .

* Alluding to the Plague which swept away so many thousands of people.

That

That blindly lost to reason's friendly ray,
On Folly's rocks are numbers cast away.

In all the phrenzy of fanatic rage,
To scare our youth and petrify old age,
Bearing Anathemas in either hand,
To damn the people of this happy land,
See bigot R—— comes, arm'd cap-a-pe,
Like that fam'd hero of antiquity,
Who sallied forth the most redoubted knight
And doughty windmills put to speedy flight,
Who foes and dangers valiantly defy'd,
While faithful *Sancho* travell'd by his side.—
So Quixote R—— with tremendous roar,
Proclaims, (what *Whitfield* has proclaim'd before),
That his commission issues from above ;
That he's the factor to *imperial Jove* ;
That crowns and sceptres he alone can give,
And from damnation can the damn'd retrieve :
That he the fiery bolts of vengeance bears,
And Jove's omnipotence he jointly shares ;
That devils tremble at his awful frown,
And to their gloomy cells abash'd sink down ;
That he the pow'rs of darkness can command,
Nor hell, nor devils, can his wrath withstand.—
“ A mystery so made for private gain,
“ These *pious harpies* ever will maintain ;
“ Nor will enthusiasts willingly let drop,
“ What brings such prosperous busines to their shop,
“ While that *pure, spotless saint*, we R—— call,
“ Keeps up with spirit the HUMBUG SPIRITUAL.”

Such

Such ye deluded wretches is the man,
 Who never acted upon reason's plan ;
 Whose dangerous tenets hurry you away,
 And o'er your passions gain tyrannic sway,
 Who, while his doctrine down your throats is cram'd
 Cries, Trust in me, or else you'll all be damn'd.—
 But true religion teacheth not this text,
 Nor is by craft, nor sophistry perplext,
 She teacheth mildness, moderation, peace,
 And sweet contentment sheds o'er ev'ry face ;
 To sober reason she commits her cause,
 Her honor, power, dignity and laws :
 Convinc'd that she no fordid motive knows,
 But would make friends of all her angry foes.—
 “ To her then bow, on her your *All* depends,
 “ Her's are the means which lead to happy ends ;
 “ By her directed, virtue's paths pursue,
 “ If reason's for you, God is for you too,”

Say, ye who still your faculties retain,
 Does not proud R — rouse your fierce disdain :
 Does not his doctrine move your honest scorn,
 Which tells you man is damn'd, ere he is born ;
 Does he not call your cheerful festive hours,
 Off'rings to *Pluto*, and th' infernal pow'rs ;
 That each convivial song, or smart *bon mot*,
 Is but the echo of the fiends below ;
 That *Bacchanalian* souls with parching thirst,
 Will in hell flames eternally be curst.—
 Hear, ye disciples of the *rosy* God,
 Your fate, when parted from this earthly clod,

Ye,

Ye, who, at *Gill's*, your painted gills expand,
 While smiles the sparkling cup in either hand ;
 Your clay well moisten, e'er you take your leave,
 Nor at the fatal parting ever grieve.

And ye who wish the purer draught to taste,
 Who seek the *Fountain* with unwearied haste ;
 To sip the fragrance of the juice divine
 And offer incense at great Bacchus' shrine,
 Ye too must go, not think the matter strange,
 This living stream for *Aeberon** exchange.
 And ye true votaries of fair Venus' charms,
 Who feel the thrillings of love's soft alarms—
 Indulge no more the tender *Tete-a-Tete*,
 You're doom'd to horror in the book of fate—
 If you this wild fanatic can believe,
 Who plainly tells you 'tis a crime to live.
 He heaven's best gift, does wickedly pervert,
 By rendering life too grievous to support.
 By making men, first destitute of hope,
 Then seek their asylum--the knife or rope ;
 While others, who'd gain Heaven at a leap,
 Explore the wonders of the mighty deep.
 That these are facts those families can tell,
 From whence a father, brother, husband fell.
 Nor is the dreadful malady remov'd
 Which has a pestilential grievance prov'd ;
 But still exists, and gathers daily strength,
 And threatens to o'erthrow the land at length.
 'Tis this the bond of social love destroys,
 And makes men odious in each others eyes ;

* A river in Hell, the water of which is beyond description nauseous and offensive.

This,

This will mistrust—and jealousy create,
 And former friendship turn to rancorous hate ;
 This has the ties of blood and nature broke
 This taught the suicide the fatal stroke.—
 Such are the ills domestic peace sustains,
 Where vile hypocrisy in triumph reigns.
 Such are the evils that embitter life,
 And bring the greatest curse—intestine strife.—
 So the stern tyrant of the barbarous north
 In storms and tempests horridly stalks forth ;
 Dire desolation marks his dreary course
 Nor rocks, nor mountains can resist his force ;
 Dejected nature heaves the heart-felt sigh
 While lost in chaos all her beauties lie.

If then ye mad, infatuated crew,
 Ye will this *Ignis Fatuus* pursue ;
 If ye despise the friendly Beacon's aid,
 Which shews the rocks where others shipwreck made ;
 If 'tis as hard to turn you from your course
 As to controul th' impetuous torrent's force ;
 If reasoning with you would as fruitless prove,
 " As to attempt the rugged Alps to move ;"
 If we as soon might wash the Ethiope white,
 As to convince you we were in the right :
 Still shall benevolence each breast inspire,
 To damp the fury of your mental fire ;
 We will with pity view the sad remains
 Of godlike man, when plunder'd of his brains.
 Survey the sacred ruins with a sigh,
 The dire effects of boundless bigotry ;

For

For tho' you signs of idiotism wear
 You still demand our charity and care ;
 The last best office we for you can do
 Is to provide a house and nurses too,
 No more to torture you with harsh rebukes,
 But in compassion send you to ST. LUKE'S *.

* An Hospital in London, for the reception of *Incurable Lunaticks*.

F I N I S.

